



Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby Cagle, MSW
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Georgia's Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS) moves to
Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning**

*Officials say transition brings early childhood education services under one agency;
Families and providers should experience seamless services*

ATLANTA, Ga., (June 18, 2012) – Beginning July 2, 2012, Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program will have a new home at Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). The program, which provides subsidized child care to low income families, has operated under the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS).

CAPS is administered in all 159 counties in Georgia through the county Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Governor Nathan Deal initiated the move as part of his FY 2013 budget, which was signed on May 7, 2012.

"This move will provide a great opportunity for early childhood education programs such as CAPS, Pre-K, Nutrition, Quality Initiatives, and Child Care Licensing to be unified under one agency, providing a more comprehensive approach to early child care education in Georgia," said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. "However, it's important to remember this is a transition, not a transformation with no major changes planned for the CAPS program through 2013."

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“It is our shared belief that this move is in the best interest of our departments, employees and, most importantly, the children and families that we serve,” said Clyde L. Reese, III, Esq., commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services. “Aligning CAPS with DECAL’s existing early education focus is positive and beneficial from the standpoint of system and policy alignment.”

Cagle said Family Independence Case Managers in the county DFCS offices will continue to determine eligibility for CAPS. Families and providers should experience seamless services, he added.

Mona Jackson, project director for CAPS since 2007, and her team of 13 employees will relocate to the DECAL offices in the East Tower of the James H. “Sloppy” Floyd building on June 22, 2012. Jackson will report to DECAL’s Assistant Commissioner of Programs Carol Hartman. Moving CAPS from DHS to DECAL was one of the proposals under the department’s application for the federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant competition.

Georgia residents can apply for child care online with Georgia COMPASS at www.compass.ga.gov. Georgia COMPASS allows customers to check their potential eligibility and apply for child care online. Customers, who create an account in Georgia COMPASS can check the status of their application online and renew their benefits. You can also reach the CAPS program at 404.657.3434.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.

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